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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#) [DOMESTIC](#) [POLITICS](#) [ENERGY](#)

SUBJECT: TRIBAL ATTACK ON U.S. OIL PIPELINE LIKELY

REPRESENTS ANTI-ROYG, NOT ANTI-USG SENTIMENTS

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull for reasons 1.5. (b and d)

1. (s/nf) Summary: On September 12, tribal elements succeeded in damaging U.S.-based Yemen Hunt Oil Company's pipeline approximately 60 kilometers from the Marib production facility. A single explosion from an IED of unknown specifications made three or four holes in the pipeline. No personnel were injured. The pipeline was shut down for repairs and operations resumed approximately 24 hours after the incident. End summary.

2. (s/nf) According to Yemen Hunt's General Manager, a pipeline leak was reported at 8 a.m. on September 12 and the pipeline was shut down at 9 a.m. There were 3-4 holes in the pipeline, the largest of which was about 4 inches in diameter. Note: The 420-kilometer-long pipeline carries oil from production fields in Marib to the deep sea port of Ras Isa on the Red Sea. End note. There were no injuries, and Hunt will provide Embassy with an estimate of lost oil when available. Hunt Security Chief said the actual incident took place about 4 a.m. Repairs were delayed until about 10 p.m. that day because of the location of the damage, approximately 60 km from the Marib production facility, and were completed at approximately 5:00 a.m. The company resumed full production shortly thereafter.

3. (s/nf) The pipeline was damaged in the Sirwah region of Marib province, northeast of the capital Sanaa. ROYG military have secured the location. Initial investigation by Hunt indicated the damage was caused by the explosion of a single IED of unknown specifications. Local press reported that government officials in Sanaa believe the attackers belong to the Jahm tribe, and that the attack was to protest the arrest of fellow tribesmen by Sanaa police last month. Note: Sirwah is the stronghold of the Jahm tribe, known in past years for kidnappings of foreigners and occasional bombings calculated to obtain benefits/services from the ROYG; most notorious was the July 2001 kidnap of a German diplomat. End note.

4. (s/nf) Ministry of Interior Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Ahmed al-Sunaidar confirmed to RSO that there is security posted on the above-ground portions of the pipeline. The absence of security in the area where the explosion took place was due to the fact that the section of pipe was in an isolated area previously covered by sand, which shifted, leaving the pipe exposed. Sunaidar committed the MOI to investigate the incident and to arrest the perpetrators. Because it is very remote, there is no American citizen travel warning to the area of the incident.

5. (s/nf) Comment: Tribal interests have occasionally targeted the Hunt pipeline in years past. The September 12 pipeline attack is notable because it is the first such action against the pipeline in well over a year. Based on available information, it appears that the ROYG was the intended target of disgruntled tribe members, likely in retaliation for the recent arrest of Zaidi shaykhs in Sana'a. There is no evidence of anti-U.S. intent per se. End comment.

HULL